The Cheerful Letter

EVERY PLACE A CHURCH; EVERY DAY THE LORD'S DAY; ALL EVENTS BLESSINGS; ALL JOY THANKSGIVING; AND ALL NATURE AND LIFE FULL OF GOD.—*James Freeman Clarke.*

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CHRISTMAS

"Peace on the earth, good will to men!"
Before us goes the star
That leads us on to holier births
And life diviner far.

Ye men of strife, forget to-day
Your harshness and your hate;
Too long ye stay the promised years
For which the nations wait!

And ye upon the tented field,
Sheathe, sheathe, to-day the sword!
By love, and not by might, shall come
The kingdom of the Lord.

O star of human faith and hope
Thy fight shall lead us on,
Until it fades in morning's glow,
And heaven on earth is won.

—*W. C. Gannett.*

CHRISTMAS DAY.

Wherever Christmas dawns, it dawns with joy. Why has the world rejoiced during all these centuries because of the birth of a child in a hamlet of Palestine? Because Christ brought new thoughts and hopes to mankind. He is leading us more and more to see God as our Father and man as our brother. While Easter gives hope of the immortal life, Christmas brings to us the hope of a better life in this world. Every Christmas Day there descends on mankind a renewed assurance that the world is to be redeemed from its wrongs and sins. Christmas comes like sunshine after a storm. The clouds roll away into a mere background of shade, behind glorious light. At Christmas all the world unites in a common gladness; and this is a presage of the time when wars shall cease, when the whole world shall be one, when the Christ of love and truth shall be everywhere accepted and loved, and when the knowledge of God shall fill the earth as the waters cover the sea. Surely, then, we are right in doing our best to make this season one of joy to all! Christianity is a joy. Whoever misses happiness has missed religion. And whoever makes a soul happier for a single day has done something to make it more strong for high endeavor. It is beautiful to observe the innumerable signs in every church, in every street, in every home, just now, that this season is one of joy. This is the outcome of the spirit of Christ, seen in the family circle, blessing the fireside, sanctifying love, prompting generous deeds, filling the hearts of old and young with piety and tenderness. Doubtless we all know homes where the hand of death has lately been felt or where the dark shadows of sorrow hover. But the spirit of religion softens even afflictions: it helps us to bow to the Best Will. It provides for everything,—for life and for death. It is a balm for the sorest wound, and teaches us

"Death is but a covered way
That leadeth unto life."

True, bereavements have been sadly common in this sad year of war. But Christmas brings a message of peace which has helped to humanize even wars themselves, and will at last utterly extinguish them.

Christmas stands for all the blessings which men inherit by being born under the influences of Christianity,—the birthright

blessings of all of us. Generation after generation has been fed by the words, the life, the death, the resurrection of Jesus, until we have in the very texture and fibre of our nature a tendency to certain convictions and purposes. Our Christian faith is born with us. We inherit its promises, we inherit its spiritual life. We look at the world with a glad expectation which we should not have had if Jesus had not been born. Christmas joy is the unconscious testimony of the human heart to the blessings given to man by the birth of one child.

The birth festival of the Prince of Peace appropriately ushers in and hallows each new year. And for us, living in the northern hemisphere, no day seems more appropriate than one of the very darkest days of the year,—just the time when the northern pole of the earth begins to turn back again to the sun, the days begin to lengthen, and the promise returns once more that spring and summer will gladden the sons of men. The birth of Christ fell, indeed, in the mid-winter of the world's history. Before Christ came there was little love among men, little hope; and outside Christianity there is little goodness or comfort still. The birth of the Christchild has created a new moral world, and has given us a peace that is stronger than poverty, grief, or death. New altars of religion have arisen, from which streams the incense of love. Misfortune is consoled. For the orphan, houses of refuge are erected, hospitals for the sick, and asylums for the aged. The echo of praise can be heard in the valley of tears. The whole air of Christendom is penetrated with tenderness and hope.

Each new Christmas Day we look with increasing hope upon the future of every part of the earth. And let us never forget that it is to the individual heart and conscience that our God has committed the progress of the world. Let us accordingly, each one individually, do our best to make our *own* lives, our *own* homes, our *own* town, conform as nearly as possible to the spirit of Christ's life and teaching. Let us try, this Christmastide, how many people, how many homes, we can render cheerful and bright. Let us strive to spread a very atmosphere of peace and love and hope and joy around us that shall almost compel those who are in our company to be happy. Let us strive to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus. Let us live, as he did, as in the very presence of God, and, like him, go about doing good. Then, like him, we shall be able to say with joy, when God calls us hence, "It is finished," and lay down our task on earth to enter into a fuller measure of God's service and presence in the brighter world. We rejoice, therefore, yea, and will rejoice, to celebrate once more the birth of Christ on this Christmas Day.

—*The Christian Life.*

THE STILL HOUR.

The stars are keenly glittering,
The moon is riding high,
The wind is softly shepherding
Cloud-flocks across the sky,
The snowy fields are glimmering bright
Beneath the moonbeam's frosty light.

It is the holy night whereon
The Prince of Peace was born,
The night when darkness turned to dawn,
When midnight was as morn,
And Heaven's own glory was revealed
To shepherds watching in the field.

It is the night the Magi came
From Orient lands afar
To do obeisance to his name,
Led by the wondrous Star,
And precious gifts of gold and myrrh
And frankincense on him confer.

O Lord, if but to our dim eyes,
Purblind because of sin,
A vision such as theirs might rise
And stir our hearts within!
Might we but such a portent see,
Perchance we, too, would worship thee.

Yea, give us, Lord, the guiding star
To find the Holy Child,
And we, weak mortals as we are,
And sinful and defiled,
Will follow fain the heavenly light
That shone on that first Christmas night.

The stars are keenly glittering,
The moon is riding high,
The wind is softly shepherding
Cloud-flocks across the sky;
And hark! those voices from afar!
And lo! within my breast a Star!

—*C. L. Story.*

If we open the door of yesterday's experience or last year's, we shall find a great many things we should rather think of on any other day than Christmas Day. Here a prejudice grown out of envy or fancied injury or petty spite; and, because of that prejudice, we have wronged some one, belittled his work, misjudged his life. Or there is some personal difference with our neighbor. It is not a serious difference,

but just serious enough to unclasp our hands and set us on opposite sides of a social crevice that grows wider and deeper as we move down toward the grave. If we are candid and honest with ourselves, we shall see behind us in the pathway these little fires of bitterness and unbrotherly feeling still smouldering, and which some of us in our meaner moments go back to and revive with our own breath.

Now comes Christmas, and asks us to return and extinguish these fires. It asks us to be generous and magnanimous enough to put ourselves right with our fellow-men. Jesus told his disciples that, unless their righteousness exceeded the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, they could not enter into the kingdom of Heaven. We may sing carols and give gifts and distribute to the destitute; but, unless our charity exceeds these formalities and goes out to adjust our differences with our fellows, goes out in the spirit of generous fairness and forgiveness, we cannot enter into the inner circle of the Christmas sentiment. It may seem to some an undignified business for a strong man or a proud woman to be concerned about the healing of these little wounds of the social relation; but in the whole round of manly or womanly graces there is none finer than the straightforward, large-hearted temper of forgiveness, unless it be the frank avowal of one's own offence and the earnest effort to repair the wrong done thereby. Embraced within the spirit of forgiveness lie the spirit of justice and the spirit of love, and these make it the final and the surest test of the Christmas spirit. We shall never hear all the Christmas chimes or feel all the Christmas sentiment or comprehend the deeper meanings of the Christmas season until we have buried our anger and ill-will, and stand among our fellowmen "with malice toward none and with charity toward all."—*J. C. Jaynes.*

THE BOOK AND MAGAZINE CLUB.

[*Send all offers and requests for this department to Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass.*]

BEFORE WRITING TO ASK FOR BOOKS, DO NOT FAIL TO READ THE FOLLOWING DIRECTIONS.

1. If you see a book offered in the Book Club which you desire to read, write directly to the address of the person who offers it. If she receives more than one request, the addresses of those to whom she cannot respond may be sent to the Book Club, and the request printed there.

2. If you have a book or paper to give or lend, write directly to the Book Club as above, and offer it with your address.

3. In sending a book, enclose, when possible, a P.O. card for response, already addressed.

4. In thanking the person who has sent you a book, always mention the name of the book. Say, "I have received 'Black Beauty,'" or whatever the book may be; not, "I have received *that book*." This saves a busy person a good deal of time. Otherwise she must consult her list constantly to find out what book has been received safely.

N.B.—Do not send books to the Book Club. Send only the *offer* to the club. To send the *book* involves packing it *twice* and paying postage *twice*, where once would suffice.

Those who offer books frequently receive notes, saying, "Shall I return you this book, or keep it, or pass it on?" *Unless otherwise stated*, all books offered in this department are *given*, and the postage paid.

Please remember, when you see a request for a book in the Book Club, to write a card to Mrs. Nichols, asking, "*Shall* I send such a book to such a person?" before sending it: else the person who requests it may receive several copies. When any one writes directly to you, asking for a book offered by you, send a card to Mrs. Nichols, saying that you *have* sent it. When you receive more requests than you can meet, send these to the Book Club to be printed there.

Please write only on one side of the paper in sending lists or letters to the secretary.

OFFERS.

Will any mother who would like to have "Gentle Measures in Training the Young," by Jacob Abbott, or any one who would like "Black Beauty," address Miss Langmaid, 71 Newbury Street, Boston, Mass.?

The Cambridge Branch offers the following books. Address Miss M. A. Vinal, 20 Lowell Street, Cambridge, Mass.

Juvenile.

"Swanhilde, and other Fairy Tales"; "Ready About; or, Sailing the Boat"; "Eleanor's Visit"; "Tattered Tom"; "Mabel Walton's Experiment"; "Little People"; "Two Little Waifs," Mrs. Molesworth; "The Bubbling Teapot"; "Lulu's Library," Louisa Alcott; "Little Miss Weezy's Brother"; Harper's Readers, 1, 2, 3; "Horse, Foot, and Dragoons"; "In Darkest England, and the Way Out," Booth.

Miscellaneous.

"A Book of Ballads"; "Snow-bound," "Miriam," Whittier; "Life's Everydayness," Rose Porter; "Departmental Ditties, and other Verses," Kipling; "Marion Graham"; "A Man of Mark," A. Hope; "The Phantom Death, and other Tales," W. Clark Russell; "A Little Pilgrim," "Old Lady Mary," Mrs. Oliphant; "Wit and Wisdom of George Eliot"; "Marie," Laura E. Richards; "Meta Gray"; "Elements of Mythology"; "The Time

Machine," H. G. Wells; "A Canterbury Pilgrimage," J. and E. R. Pennell; "Norwood," H. W. Beecher

Miss C. L. Murdock, Brighton, Mass., offers the following: "Heroes, Hero-Worship, and the Heroic in History," Carlyle; "Addresses," Drummond; "Shirley"; "Jane Eyre"; "We Two," Donovan; "Advance of Science in the last Half Century"; "Off the Skelligs," "Poems," J. Ingelow.

Miss Helen Waldo, 54 Burroughs Street, Jamaica Plain, Mass., offers copies of a magazine, *Forestry and Irrigation*.

Mrs. W. B. Nichols, 2 Kensington Park, Roxbury, Mass., offers Barnes's "Notes on Job, Daniel, and Isaiah."

REQUESTS.

[*Read directions at beginning of Book Club before writing.*]

Those who send offers and requests for the Book Club will do us a kindness by noting the following suggestions: 1. Please write very clearly. 2. Do not use a pencil. 3. Do not use contractions, especially names of States (as Cal. and Col. for California, Colorado). 4. Write on one side only of the paper. 5. Do not forget to give your full address. (The State is now and then omitted.) 6. Do not send matter for the Book Club to Miss Clarke, but to Mrs. Nichols, the Book Club secretary.

Those who write to us for the first time must send the name and address of a minister as a reference. Without that the request will not be printed.

1. Mrs. Cora A. Hoskinson, Three Rivers, Michigan, thanks all who have sent her reading, and asks for an "Organ Instructor" for her two girls. Also would like "Mrs. Wiggs of the Cabbage Patch" and any magazines. Will pass on, after reading.

2. Miss Mary Seay, Warren, Arkansas, Route 2, an elderly woman, fond of reading, will be very glad of any reading to help pass many weary hours.

3. I want to thank the club for the nice literature I have received. I have received letters from some of its members and enjoy them very much. I would like to receive a Speaker that has recitations and orations in it for young people from the age of seventeen to twenty. Will appreciate the above very much and any reading matter. Miss Grace E. Tennyson, Apache, Oklahoma.

4. L. H. Pringle, Bogue, North Carolina, a young man who loves to read, would be glad of any good reading matter suitable for young folk.

5. A kind friend, Miss C. W. Davis of Philadelphia, had *The Cheerful Letter* sent to me (they *are* cheerful letters), so that I may send in a request for reading matter, as I do not have very good health and have also lost my voice which makes it lonesome. I would like a red-lettered Bible, Boyd's "Syllabic Shorthand," some books on Art Needlework. Any good reading matter I would pass on to others, who would enjoy it so much. Nellie Wheelock, Blossburg, Tioga County, Pennsylvania.

6. Mrs. J. M. Fisher, Mansfield, Texas, will be glad of any magazines.

7. Mattie Hulse, Stella, Oklahoma, asks for general reading.

8. C. B. Frazelle, Swansboro, North Carolina, would be pleased to receive books suitable for a Sunday-school library.

9. Mrs. Rena Gamage, Macomb, Illinois, asks for "Say and Seal."

10. Rev. B. F. Wade, Chautauqua, New York, would like "Poor Richard's Almanack."

11. Miss Florence A. Langley, 333 Ohio Street, Bangor, Maine, will be thankful for any reading. She is unable to go out during the winter months and will appreciate anything sent her.

12. Mrs. Carter Bailey, Wadesboro, North Carolina, mother of five children, ages sixteen to two years, will be glad of reading.

The correspondents of Mrs. Mary L. Clarke of Cambridge will be grieved to learn of her death. Mrs. Clarke has been one of our most faithful workers, and will be greatly missed.

The address of Miss A. A. Peatross is now Campbell, North Carolina, R. F. D. No. 1.

Mrs. Angie Hicks is now in Windom, North Carolina.

Rev. C. F. Dykeman, Dakota, Minnesota, asks for "Transcendentalism in New England," by O. B. Frothingham, and "Pioneers of Religious Liberty in America."

THE MOTHERS' COUNCIL.

THE KINDERGARTEN.

(*Continued.*)

The Kindergarten Perverted.

President G. Stanley Hall, Clark University: "I believe heart and soul in the kindergarten idea as it lay in Froebel's mind; but in America, where the kindergarten has had a development far beyond that in the land of its origin, it has been perverted so that I am often in doubt whether, in its present form here, it has, on the whole, a good or bad influence. It has become excessively metaphysical and symbolic and correspondingly negligent of hygiene. Its leaders are ultra-idealists and abhor physiology and everything evolutionary. Along with this has grown an intolerant orthodoxy that seeks to ostracize new departures and to attain a dead uniformity. Piety to the letter of Froebel has taken the place of fidelity to his spirit. Many of the best kindergartners would heartily agree with all I have said; but there is not one in the country, so far as I have ever heard, that has yet dared to say so openly, such is the terrorism which is making the kindergarten a little sect by itself and isolating it more and more from our education system."

A Believer.

President Edmund J. James, North-western University: "I cannot speak of kindgergartens in general or kindergarten training in general, but I may say a word about both in particular. I took great pains to have my own children, two boys and a girl, attend the kindergarten from the earliest age at which they would be accepted until they were ready to go to school, which, in their case, was somewhat later than in the case of most children. I have never found reason to regret their attendance at the kindergarten. On the contrary, I am convinced that the rapid progress in school work subsequently, and, in general, their quickness to see certain kinds of things, are owing in no small part to this valuable training which they received at the beginning of their communal life. They are all in advance of the average child of the same age in school, and do their work with great ease; and I am inclined to attribute both facts to a considerable extent to their life in the kindergarten."

A Great Deal of Good.

President H. C. King, Oberlin College: "I believe that the different kindergartens of our country present such a variety of methods that it is impossible to pass a judgment which shall include them all. Some teachers have doubtless carried the distinctive kindergarten features to excess, and yet I am confident that a great deal of good is being accomplished by many of the kindergartens, just as they are at present."

Another President.

President David Starr Jordan, Leland Stanford Junior University: "There are all kinds of kindergartens and all kinds of primary schools, so this question cannot be discussed in any definite manner without defining the kind of kindergarten or primary school that one has in mind. In general, however, one may safely say that the kindergarten principle is one of the best contributions to education which has been made in the last hundred years. Manual training is another such contribution. One can easily imagine that a child who has become accustomed to the spontaneous life of the kindergarten might object to the rigidity of the average overcrowded primary school. This, however, is more of an argument for changing the nature of the primary school than for abolishing the kindergarten."—*From Good Housekeeping.*

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

It was obvious to him, however, that those who were under ragged school influence were but as a drop of the bucket, in comparison with the vast number in the metropolis and other large cities who were totally uncared for; and his heart bled for them. Happily, not *his* heart only: there were other workers in the field. And in the following year these were all drawn together in one band of brotherhood, known as the Ragged School Union.

From the Diary:—

"*April 28th*, 1843.—My birthday. I am this day forty-two years old. More than

half my course is run, even supposing that I fulfil the age assigned by the Psalmist to fallen man. 'A short life and a merry one,' says the sensualist's proverb. A long life and a useful one would be more noble and more Scriptural. But it is spoken to the praise of Solomon, and by God himself, that he had not asked a long life, neither, then, will I. But I do ask—for to this we have the warranty of the Holy Word—that the residue of my years be given to the advancement of the Lord's glory, and to the temporal and eternal welfare of the human race. Surely I may also pray to see, and even reap, some of the fruit of my labors, to discern at least some probability of harvest, although to be gathered by other hands. The Factory Bill drags along, ten years have witnessed no amelioration; the plan for education is defeated; the opium effort is overthrown. On the colliery question alone have I had partial success, and that even is menaced by evil and selfish men."

Early in January Lord Londonderry had invited the formation of a league to obtain the repeal of the Colliery Bill, and by February there had been a "mighty stir" in Scotland to effect this end. While in Ireland there had been organized hostility to the Chimney Sweepers' Act.

From the Diary:—

"*June 6th* [1843].—Grand battles by the Indian mail! Grand victories and still grander injustice! Wrong and robbery on a splendid and successful scale are sure to be hushed up, if not applauded. I shrink with a combined feeling of terror and nausea from our national sins.

"*July 10th.*—Every day adds to my burthen. I have just received a long treatise, by a medical man, written in defence of the factory system. This will have its weight, and, humanly speaking, add another obstruction to the enactment of remedial measures."

Lord Ashley's philanthropic labors did not, as his diaries abundantly indicate, meet with unqualified and universal approval. On the contrary, he was often attacked even by those on whose support he had a right to count, as well as by those who differed from him in principle and policy.

Miss Harriet Martineau was one of these. She says: "His residence was in an agricultural country where the laborers were reduced to the lowest condition then known to Englishmen. It was so on his father's estates, on the estates to which in the course of nature he was to succeed; yet he did not take under his protection his nearest neighbors, with whose need he was, or ought to have been, acquainted."

The truth was that Lord Ashley's father was not in sympathy with the views and aims of his son, and so Lord Ashley had no power to improve the condition of the laborers on the estate.

In November of this year (1843) took place the annual dinner of the Sturminster Agricultural Society in Dorsetshire, and in reply to Lord Grosvenor (afterward the Marquis of Westminster), who proposed his health, Lord Ashley made the remarkable speech to which the following extract alludes:—

"*December 1st.*—Last night took chair of meeting at Sturminster. Spoke, in giving thanks for my health. Wonderfully well received, though I uttered some strong truths respecting wages, dwellings, truck, delay of payment, and exclusion from gleaning."

Unhappily this speech brought him into collision with his father, who only was responsible for any neglect of the peasantry on the family estate in Dorsetshire. The speech dwelt upon "the obligations which alone can sanctify the possession of property, and render its tenure a joy to all classes, alike honorable, beneficial, and secure." In the course of it he drew attention to the stigma attaching to the county of Dorset.

From the Diary:—

"*Dec. 11th* [1843].—Received yesterday a letter from a Mr. Crofts, to say that he and other (who greatly admired me) were oftentimes perplexed to defend my consistency, etc., and then to quote the state of the school-house at Woodlands, and certain other cottages. Alas! too true; yet how can I prevent it? God knows I have long mourned over these things, and long resolved on every self-denial rather than not remove them. These unhappy facts will be passed into hostile hands and be used against me. *Half-past eleven at night.*—I am awfully posted between two forces,—the Anti-Corn Law League on one side, my father on the other. He broke out to-night in severe reprehension of my speech, abstained from violent language or violent manner, but told me I was exciting the people, inducing them to make extortionate demands; they were not easily put down when once up, etc.; they got on very well, he did not know how, with seven and even six

shillings a week; that their wages (and he then passed through all the arguments) could not be raised; that I was inexperienced, etc. As for their dwellings, it was very easy to point out the evil. Where was the remedy? He, at least, could not afford it (my speech had dealt only in generals); had been engaged all his life in gradually abating the mischief; these things cost too much.

"*Christmas Day* [1843].—'This is the day that the Lord hath made: let us rejoice and be glad in it.' Rose before six to prayer and meditation. Ah, blessed God, how many in the mills and factories have risen at four, on this day, even, to toil and suffering! Equal laws and equal rights in this free country, or, at least the equal administration of those we possess, yet what a shameful and cruel disparity here! There is the mockery of an enactment which we cannot enforce, and which, year after year, we vainly endeavor to strengthen."

Toward the end of the year the painful intelligence was received that there had been a massacre of Nestorian Christians. . . . To Lord Ashley, who was waiting anxiously, day by day, to know what steps were being taken for the protection of the oppressed Nestorians, suspense became intolerable; and he wrote to Lord Aberdeen, the secretary of state for foreign affairs, as follows:—

DEC. 19, 1843.

My dear Lord,—Is it not possible, nay, more, is it not absolutely right, that some effort should be made by the British government on behalf of the Nestorian Christians? Lord Palmerston interposed, in aid of the Jews at Damascus, and won golden opinions by such a becoming and manly policy. Surely an administration, founded on such principles as those we profess, should be forward in the assertion of every claim of justice and humanity.

Had these unhappy Christians been willing to acknowledge the supremacy of Rome, they would have obtained (I cannot say enjoyed) the protection of France. Is it to be endured that a power like Turkey (which in our folly we have saved from the grasp of Russia), "the very form and pressure" of ignorance and cruelty, should be allowed so to reward our exertions and uproot Christianity from the soil of her dominions? For God's sake, my dear Lord, do something before the meeting of Parliament.

Lord Aberdeen replied, saying that some measures had already been taken for the protection of the Nestorians. . . . While thankful for what had been done, the warm heart of Lord Ashley shrank from the negotiations of "a frigid diplomacy" in any case where suffering and oppressed fellow-Christians were discerned; and he acknowledged Lord Aberdeen's letter in the following tems:—

DEC. 28TH, 1843.

My dear Lord,—Many thanks for the information you have so kindly communicated to me. May God bless your efforts in this righteous cause!

But, my dear Lord, are you tied, in such a matter as this, to all the tedious and hypocritical details of a frigid diplomacy? Would Russia allow her Greeks, or France her papists, to be thus insulted and rooted out? Surely there is such a thing as an unjust and perilous discretion.

But God bless what you have done, and advance it still farther!

From the Diary:—

"*December 27th.*—Wrote a few days ago to Lord Aberdeen on behalf of the Nestorian Christians. . . . He is a worthy man, but very timid and very slow. Why did he not interfere before? He might have averted the second massacre. . . . Walked to-day to talk with Friend, the farmer at Brockington. A blessing to have such a man on the estate: honest to his landlord; good to the laborer; a pious man, a sensible man, a just man."—*From the Life of Shaftesbury, by Hodder.*

NATURAL HISTORY.

It has long been my belief that fairies are the little souls of something. At first I was puzzled to know of what, but since the coming of Semiramis it is quite simple. Her mysterious amber eyes and lithe little body of furry silver have taught me the truth: fairies are the souls of all little kittens. And let only him deny this who can cast the first proof to the contrary!

I say let "him" deny it; for, whatever is fragrant to believe and pleasant to preach about the kittens of the world, every woman is fain to accept and to repeat. How gladly, then, will she welcome such a fair doctrine as this concerning the kittens that have left the world! And, if her own "little lion, small and dainty sweet," be still her daily

companion, she has only to sit with it in her arms for an hour some night when the moon is full, to understand that to all strange, sweet influences and potent hidden presences the reticent, eerie little creature is akin. Especially will she feel this if, as I trust every woman who loves a kitten knows, it has been named for some beautiful dead queen.

Something of this I confided to Peleas as we sat together over the fire one night soon after the arrival of Semiramis. My confidence, I admit, was cautiously given; for Peleas, though he is so old, is alive to most gracious unrealities. Yet he persists, as do most men, in classifying cats among the facts of the world and in treating them accordingly. Now a beautiful kitten, properly understood, is no more to be rated with the stupid things that have dimensions and dates than is a rose. There is a magic about her for which her mere existence does not account. I wanted to teach this to Peleas. One of the penalties of being very old, as we are, is our unwillingness to bother with new beliefs. But one of the incidents of loving some one very much is to want him to believe quite as you do. No wonder I was a little frightened to begin.

Semiramis lay before us on a green cushion, her head turned from us in superb indifference, her whole attitude that of a tired queen ready to murmur, "Off with his head," as an answer to argument.

"I feel," said I to Peleas, "as if we were two Nubian slaves whose gifts she has just despised."

"So do I," said Peleas, so affably that I suspected that he had been dozing.

"Peleas," I went on, "which do you believe Semiramis was long ago, a queen or a real goddess?"

"A queen," said Peleas decidedly; "only queens are as idle as cats. Goddesses bustle about too much."

It was that bit of sympathy on the part of Peleas—delivered, as I now believe, to cover the fact that he had been asleep—which lured me on.

"I think so, too," I cried. "And, Peleas, I know what she will be after she is dead. Of course after they die they go somewhere or do something: you've only to look at Semiramis's wonderful Persian tail to be sure she is immortal! And of course if you've any humor you can't picture heaven with cats serenading on the pearl battlements. But, O Peleas, I know what becomes of them."

"What does?" inquired Peleas uncertainly.

"Haven't you ever thought?" I cried. "Why, you know when they are alive they really are the goblins among all animals. They 'walk by themselves,' they are mysterious, and they live apart, no matter how much you love them. Their eyes change with the light, they see in the dark, they love the moon and the night—they are 'fey' all their days. Well, when they die—isn't it clear?—they become fairies!"

"Delicious rubbish!" said Peleas, smiling.

If Semiramis had suddenly quoted from the Persian, I could not have been more amazed.

"I should like to know what is more delicious than most rubbish?" I inquired with spirit. "Not facts, surely?"

"Let's read a bit more of 'In Umbria,'" said Peleas with that main-strength tact which always maddens me. I nodded sulkily enough, and never heard a word.

"You don't care about cats," I informed him, "because you don't know how to take care of them. Cats are like olives and bananas. You have to acquire a taste for all three. You cannot do this by degrading them and frightening them."

"A degraded olive and a frightened banana," interrupted Peleas, in idiotic bewilderment.

"Cats!" I cried. "Listen, Peleas, I have been thinking. I have made up some instructions about the voluntary care of cats which, if you will follow, will teach you to love them. Will you listen?"

Then I said off the instructions to him; and, as they are very important, I will set them down here.

"It is as erroneous," I began, "to say that you dislike cats, as that you dislike children or books or jam. Say 'some children, some books, some jam, some cats.'

"Never, with mistaken kindness, take a cat on your lap and massage it. Massage will not cultivate your own repose nor second the cat's.

"Never disturb a cat that is occupying your favorite chair. And do not sit down in the chair without looking. The cat was upholstered for other reasons.

"Byron, Baudelaire, Taine, Christopher North, Prosper Merimée, Victor Hugo, Leo the Twelfth, the Carlyles, Matthew Arnold, Gautier, and Scott were all zealously devoted to cats. Who am I?"

Peleas was somewhat ruffled by the last

triumphant list and its masterly interrogative conclusion.

"Pshaw!" said he. "One would think that it's one's moral duty to like cats."

"So it is," I averred. "That truth has led me to make a very important addition to historical memoirs. Marcus Aurelius was very fond of cats, yet curiously enough, he forgot to acknowledge in his first chapter how much he owed to them. I have remedied his neglect and made up a paragraph, which should have been set with the list of virtues that he owed to his father, his grandfather, and the others. I will say it to you:—

" 'To my cat Aholibah I owe teaching of reserve, of urbanity, and of infinite indifference to the methods and misunderstandings of the simple.

" 'To my cat Hesione, because of her communion with the moon and the night, and because of her delicate body and her serene eyes, I owe my conviction of her immortality, and therefore of my own.

" 'And to my cat Herodias, never to say or to write in a letter that red herrings, cream, or any fowls are more honorable as food for me than as stolen sweets for felines whom the gods made hungry.' "

When I had finished, Peleas was laughing I explained to him the habits of Cheshire cats, and we said no more.—*From "The Kitten in the House," by Zona Gale, in Outing.*

(The Editor wishes that she could give the whole of this charming little skit, but it is allowable to quote only a part.)

LETTERS OF A SISTER.

To her Brother, James Freeman Clarke.

OCT. 17, 1834.

My dear James,—Since grandmamma wrote her letter, we have been very much alarmed about grandfather. He was taken very ill with an affection that seemed like paralysis, though it has since proved to be something else; but the physicians thought that he could not live many hours. He has now revived and recovered very much indeed, and we think will be well again soon. It was quite alarming, because he had no power over his limbs, and his mind was entirely bewildered; but now he has recovered his mind and almost the use of his limbs. This happened the day before H. and G. were married, and prevented me from seeing them united; for we were all invited to the wedding, even Thomas. H. went, however, for Mrs.—— chose not to tell her of her uncle's illness till after the wedding was over, thinking, like a sensible woman, that she could manage it much better than Providence; but Mr. R. spoiled her plan by coming up to Helen in a condoling voice and speaking of the bad news from Newton, for H. and G., A. and C., S. and S. had been here the day before to see him, and found him so ill. Helen, of course, thought he was dead, and the shock spoiled all her pleasure; and, when she came out here directly after the wedding was over, she looked paler than I have ever seen her.

I had the honor of a visit from Mr. Emerson the other day; but I regret to say that it was the honor alone that I had, for I was so unfortunate as to be from home.

Miss Martineau is staying at Stockbridge with Miss Sedgwick, and is reported as being delightful. She goes to Niagara next with Washington Irving, two Germans, etc., after that to Washington, etc. She will be with you before she comes here. As Prince Puchler Muscan is travelling incognita, you may chance to entertain him unawares.

Mr. and Mrs. Pierpont speak in a shabby manner of Kentucky. Mrs. P. told mother she would be raving distracted to think of going to such a place to live and leaving Boston; but mother answered, in her naïve way, that she should be happy anywhere with her children, and so Mrs. P. had no more to say about that. Farewell.

One reason of the incoherent nature of this letter is that I watched last night, and do not feel like doing anything to-day but *writing letters,*—as if that was the easiest thing to do. Adieu.

NOV. 14, 1834.

My dear James,—Where upon earth did you leave that Mosheim? I think Lucifer must have carried it off with him to the infernal regions; for I can find no trace of it above ground, and Chandler Robbins and Mr. Sparhawk and Helen Davis are making the greatest *towse* about it. Do pray bite the nails of forgetfulness with the teeth of recollection till you can determine the exact spot, room, house, street, and city where you left it; for neither the one nor the other do I know. A musty author came here the other evening to get that poem of Dr.

Lieber's which he said the Doctor had promised him for his book that he is making if he could get it translated, and he was rather irate when I told him that the Doctor told you to publish it in the magazine of Mr. Buckingham. He showed me a letter from the Doctor telling him that he might have it; said he was at Niagara with the Doctor; that he saw a Mr. Clarke of Louisville there, who could not have been you, as he did not know anything about Boston and wore no spectacles. He doubted whether the Doctor's poem would do him any credit; proposed to get Henry Hedge to translate it; said that you told Dr. L. that you would get a lady to translate it, etc. I sent him to John Sargent to get it, and that is the last I have heard of it.

I heard Waterston preach to the little children of Mr. Taylor's Sunday-school, and to my amazement it was a piece of pure Transcendentalism made plain to their little minds. Thomas went with me and was as much pleased as I was, and has begun to write a letter to you to tell you all about it. I mean he shall go there whenever he is in town Sunday afternoon. He generally goes to Newton. Grandfather is better, but still confined to his bed. This Waterston is really an extraordinary young man.

B. O. died last week. I went to see S. to-day, and she seems very happy that he died full of faith and yet happy; for his father and L. were like Scylla and Charybdis on each side. She said the reason she wanted you to come to Milton was that he was beginning to think about religion, and she thought he would care more for what you said than for the same from an older person; but F. C. went to Dr. Harris, and they told him all that was necessary. His conversion, if such it may be called, was entirely her own work, I apprehend; and, though L. tried, as in duty bound, to alarm him, he was easily soothed again by S., who used only the words of Scripture to comfort him. I admire how she can resist the influence of her father. He looks with such contempt upon her faith and is a person of so much knowledge and talent that I should hardly dare to speak before him. To-day he was in the room when we were talking together, and Sarah advanced the common notion that those things that we loved too much were taken away from us as a punishment. This he called an old maid's theory,—that it was wrong to love one thing more than another. Then he laughed at her belief in particular Providences. But he spoke of God with deep reverence, though he said the Christian religion would long ago have perished from the earth if the Epistles of St. Paul had not preserved it containing, as they do, a different theology and one suited to the popular mind, though to the philosopher it is ridiculous and hateful. This appeared to me an acute remark. It was a new idea to me to make that an objection to Christianity.

Do you know C. H. and her husband live with us? I like her: she is full of reverence. Ida R. also abides here, and Misses S. and S. of Lancaster, Mr. W., etc.

REPORT OF NOVEMBER MEETING.

The first meeting of the season was held at 25 Beacon Street, on Friday, November 4, with Miss Clarke in the chair. Thirty-six were present. The reports of the Secretary and Treasurer were given

Miss Clarke announced that at future meetings there would be a question-box, into which could be dropped questions or suggestions for making the meetings more interesting. They need not be signed. Attention was called to the new leaflets which are now ready for distribution.

The Secretary asked that records be kept of all letters and reading sent, as the printed questions will probably be sent out again in April, and a year's report will be asked for.

Miss Brown reported that since June, fifteen libraries had been sent out, three of which were new. A library committee, consisting of Miss Frost, Miss Storer, Miss Jenks, and Mrs. Hastings, has been appointed to help Miss Brown.

Miss Jenks read the names of several books, and asked for a discussion of them.

A letter was read from Fort Sill stating that no more reading was desired at present.

Twenty-four committees were represented and three reported by letter.

The Chestnut Hill branch has sent out its tenth travelling library, the Winchester branch sends twelve or fifteen current numbers of magazines each month. The reports all showed that the usual good work is being done. The West Roxbury Branch was represented for the first time.

The meeting adjourned at 12.20 o'clock.

BERTHA LANGMAID,
Secretary.

OCT. 17, 1904.

Dear Cheerful Letter Friends,—We have moved from Morgan City, Louisiana. We are in a wilderness now,—yes, even in the jungles,—my husband having to work in the woods, getting out cypress, all fall and winter; and, as he has a large camp five feet above ground, we thought it best to come and cook for him and our three boys all fall and winter. We are deprived of all company, and reading of any kind is welcome by us. We all love to read at night. We are seven in family,—two boys near grown, one fourteen years, and one daughter eighteen years, very fond of reading. She has been teaching school in Morgan City two terms; but her health was declining, and she came with us here for a change. She looks well now, and enjoys the cool woods and autumn flowers and the songs of the birds.

Some members of our family like funny stories, others like religious reading. I have a boy of nine years. He is the baby, and the life of our family. We are fifteen miles from Bayou Chene, our nearest post-office. Though far from neighbors, I feel it is best for us all to be together, and boys need a mother's and sister's influence. And I know God is here,—the heading of *Cheerful Letter*, saying every place is a church. I have thought so often of those words, and I feel this camp can be a church if God is here. We cannot drift beyond his love and care. May God's blessings rest upon that precious little book, *Cheerful Letter*. A true praying friend for every member, sincerely, Addie E. Smith, Bayou Chene, Louisiana.

THE AMUSEMENT COLUMN.

OLD ENOUGH TO BE NEW.

Hieroglyphics was a favorite game forty years ago, but I have not seen it played for a long time. Send one of the company, who must know the secret, out of the room, and ask the others to choose some short word which you will write for her in hieroglyphics. It *can* be written with a short stick upon the table, but it is better for several reasons to write it upon the floor with a stick about a yard long. A "conjuring wand" of willow or hazel, supposed to possess magic properties, may be used in several games, some of which will be given later.

Suppose the word "lamp" is chosen. The player is recalled, and you write, making mysterious passes over the floor, which do *not* resemble hieroglyphics or the letters or signs of any language, ancient or modern. Presently you make some remark, either to her or to the other players. It may be "Look, don't miss a word," or "Lena will guess it, I know," or anything else, the first letter of which begins with L. This gives her the first letter of the word—L. Only the consonants, however, are given in this way. The vowels are given by a succession of raps on the floor. One rap means A, two raps E, three raps I, four O, five U, six W, and seven Y. In this case you, of course, rap once. The reader now has La. Make a few passes more and say, "Move back, please," or anything else that begins with M., a few more passes, and you say something beginning with P. Then, holding the stick up from the floor, ask, "What was that?" She, of course, answers, "Lamp"; and the players are puzzled as to how she knew it.

Some of the company will probably guess that you give the clue by speaking. When some remark is made to this effect, you can puzzle them still further by saying, "Why, I can write it without saying a word." Then write a word that is all, or nearly all, vowels, such as eye, you, or year.

Be careful to separate the different letters well by writing between the sentences, particularly to write between the vowels. Speak as naturally as possible, as if you meant all that you said. Players who know the secret should do their part in keeping it, by seeming to take it all in earnest, doing what is asked of them, and answering any questions they may be asked. The writer should never speak except to give the clue; but, if it should be necessary to do so, he may lay the wand over his right shoulder to indicate that what he is saying has no significance.

If the word "Hieroglyphics" seems too hard and unpronounceable for little folk, it might be called "Magic writing" when played with them.

I.

ANAGRAMS.

What we wish to all our readers.

A cheery man is a grand army, straw led.

II.

TRANSPOSITIONS.

The following fruits were seen on the table at an evening party. What were they?

Go near, nipple-pea, cheap, pleap, lump, smile, stun, melons, dolmans

III.

CHRISTMAS ENIGMA.

I am composed of 33 letters. My 30, 7, 31, 2, 33, we like to hear on Christmas morning.

A hospitable 28, 18, 19, 4 is always open on Christmas 20, 1, 6 to friends who 26, 27, 14, 11, and 12, 22, 32, 3 together. If wise, they will 24, 9, 15 heartily, but temperately, and 28, 5, 29, 32, 23, nothing more harmful than 15, 24, 25. Probably each will 11, 1, 23, 8, and 13, 10, 9, 32, 17, 27, and all will admire the beautiful 16, 18, 21, 21, 6 wreaths. Perhaps they will wind up the evening with some pleasant 17, 9, 2, 27, and some one will repeat my whole, which is a proverb of Solomon, appropriate to the occasion.

K. L. W.

IV.

I went to the Crimea, and stopped there:
They sent me back because I did not go there. (*Selected.*)

V.

DROP LETTER PUZZLES.

J–g –n, j–g –n, th– f– –tp–th w–y,
–nd m–rr–l– cr–ss th– st–l– –
A m–rr– h– –rt g– –s –ll th– w–y
– s–d –n– t–r–s –n – m–l– –

VI.

For the Cheerful Letter.

SYNONYMS.

Substitute synonyms for the following words, and give a quotation from Shakespeare.

Execute, grief, anxiety, resolution, assassinate, indefinite–article, feline word–meaning-to–join, consequently, allow–ourselves, exist, jovial.

"Indefinite article" is a.

VII.

CONUNDRUMS.

1. Of how many tongues is a college-bred woman mistress?

2. What is the value of a woman?

3. Ask a question which cannot be answered in the negative. (*Selected.*)

Answers to Puzzles in November Number.

I. It was not the first and the thirteenth traveller who went into number one, but the first and the second. So the thirteenth is "left out in the cold," after all.

II. Thanksgiving.

III. An egg.

IV. Onion.

V. 1. Too bad (two bad).

2. The Niagara Falls is a wonder; Queen Elizabeth was a Tudor.

3. Telegraph, telephone, tell a woman.

VI.

Through lanes and hedgerows pearly,
Go forth the reapers early,
To reap the golden corn;
Good luck betimes we're shearing,
For winter now is nearing,
And we must fill the barns.

At noon they leave the meadows,
Beneath the friendly shadows
Of Monarch Oak to dine;
And through the branches hoary
Goes up the thankful story,
The harvest is so fine.

IMPORTANT NOTICES.

Errata.—By accident, the proofs of the November number were not sent to the editor of the Amusement Column, and thus several mistakes were not corrected.

In the Cross-word Enigma read,—

"My fifth is in turkey and also in duck."

In the charade, "a lovely boy," not "a lonely boy."

The words "Lear" and "Clear," dropped out from Maude Clarke's list.

There will be a meeting of the Cheerful Letter Exchange workers at 25 Beacon Street, Friday, January 6, at 10.30 o'clock. All interested in this object are cordially invited.

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